

Paragon Bridge  
Spanning the Yellowstone River  
on the Milwaukee Road  
Miles City Vicinity  
Custer County  
Montana

HAER No. MT-15

HAER  
MONT,  
9 - MILCIV,  
3 -

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

Paragon Bridge

MT-15

HAER  
MONT,  
9-MILCLY  
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**Location:** Spanning the Yellowstone River on the Milwaukee Road, 4-1/2 miles southwest of Miles City, Custer County, Montana.

**Date of Construction:** ca. 1907

**Present Owner:** Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific Railroad  
516 W. Jackson Blvd.  
Chicago, Illinois 60606

**Present Use:** Railroad Bridge

**Significance:** In 1907-1909 a new transcontinental railroad was built through Montana. The railroad (the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific) runs along the north bank of the Yellowstone for about 80 miles between Terry and Forsyth, except where it crosses at this point for a junction with the Burlington Northern (formerly the Northern Pacific). This four-span, 1,080-foot bridge is the western-most of three Milwaukee Road bridges across the Yellowstone. Each of the four pin-connected Parker through truss spans is 270 feet in length. The superstructures are as follows: the lower chord of the outside two panels at each end is laced composite channel sections and the rest of the lower chord is of eyebars; verticals are laced composite channel sections; diagonals are eyebars and turnbuckles; the upper chord is a continuous plate riveted atop two composite channel sections with lacing bars riveted to their lower flanges. The spans rest on concrete abutments and three concrete piers. Because the tracks are not perpendicular to the flow of the river, the piers and abutments are not perpendicular to the trusses. Therefore, the bridge supports are skewed about 9 feet and the inclined end posts are not parallel to each other. This skew occurs only at the end panels; all other panels are in line with each other. Composite I-beam stringers are riveted to the web of composite I-beam floor beams which are riveted to the superstructure. A deck of wood ties rest on the stringers and carries one set of tracks. This bridge was probably built in

1907 by the American Bridge Company of New York. In early 1980, the Milwaukee Road abandoned its tracks west of Miles City, including this bridge. Although the State of Montana is trying to retain the tracks west of Miles City, the fate of this bridge is unknown at this time.

Transmitted by:

Kevin Murphy, Historian HAER, 1984; from data compiled by Fredric L. Quivik, 1979